Letter of Inquiry

Ms. Erin K. Hogan

The Booth Ferris Foundation

c/o JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Philanthropic Services

270 Park Avenue, 16th Floor

New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Hogan,

West Chester University, a public institution founded in 1871, is one of the fourteen members belonging to Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education and is the fourth largest university within the Philadelphia region. We pride ourselves on the continually affordable tuition we offer which allows for students of all backgrounds the opportunity of higher education. During the fall of 2011, we had 14,267 students seeking degrees in more than 170 undergraduate and master’s degree programs, with a six-year graduation rate of 65.3%. In addition to our 24 men and women’s athletic teams, students can involve themselves in any of our 264 student organizations which range from honor societies to social equity. One organization in particular is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning Ally Alliance (LGBTQA) Services.

The LGBTQA community on West Chester University’s campus is seeking to educate not only fellow students, but also employees of the university and individuals in the community. Members of this group struggle everyday through unnecessary hardships that can be avoided if people were more familiar with what being part of this community meant. The university’s goal is to assist the LGBTQA community with this endeavor in hopes of further broadening the perspectives of our students and to help create an even more diverse environment at West Chester University. With the help from the Booth Ferris Foundation, we can make this a reality.

I invite you to join in the LGBTQA’s efforts by providing funding in the amount of $XXXX for a center to be built so they have a dedicated “safe space” to receive services. Currently the LGBTQA Services is located in a common office space shared by other organizations on campus. This is not ideal as it does not provide the students of this community an area they can truly call their own and feel comfortable. A new location will afford the LGBTQA Services the opportunity to build their department by having office space for a new Director, the Graduate Assistant and a multi-purpose space to conduct weekly meetings and hold various events during the school year.

The main goal of this project is to provide a new location so the LGBTQA Services may expand their efforts in gaining support for this group as they continue to fight for equal protection rights. If more people are willing to learn about the individuals who comprise this community, there is a greater chance of increased acceptance. In a world that is continually changing, we as individuals need to keep an open mind and adapt as necessary. We thank you in advance for considering beginning a relationship with West Chester University’s LGBTQA Services. If your foundation is unable to provide monetary support, we ask for your expertise

Sincerely,

XXXXX

1. **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

West Chester University, a public institution founded in 1871, is one of the fourteen members belonging to Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education and is the fourth largest university within the Philadelphia region. We pride ourselves on the continually affordable tuition we offer which allows for students of all backgrounds the opportunity of higher education. During the fall of 2011, we had 14,267 students seeking degrees in more than 170 undergraduate and master’s degree programs, with a six-year graduation rate of 65.3%. In addition to our 24 men and women’s athletic teams, students can involve themselves in any of our 264 student organizations which range from honor societies to social equity. One organization in particular is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning Ally Alliance (LGBTQA) Services.

The Office of LGBTQA Services at West Chester University has been a department under the Division of Student Affairs since 1994. Part of this office includes the LGBTQA Advocacy Committee. This committee is comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The committee meets on a regular basis during the academic year to discuss campus climate issues and works closely with campus leaders to create a warmer campus climate for the LGBTQA community. The main focus of this office is to aid students identifying themselves as LGBTQA by offering support and guidance with issues these individuals may come across.

1. **STATEMENT OF NEED/PROBLEM**

West Chester University supports the LGBTQA community. In an attempt to discover how West Chester’s students, faculty and staff view the “climate” of the campus, a survey was administered in 2010. The survey revealed a consistent, quantitative revelation. While there is an overall positive atmosphere among a majority of participants, there are two groups whom felt mistreated. People of color and members of the LGBTQA community reported feelings of discomfort and even unsafe in certain campus settings. The university made it a goal to implement change to create a “safer, warmer climate.”

The LGBTQA community comprises ten percent of the student body, which accounts for approximately 1,500 students. The Office of LGBTQA Services resides in a 10 x 10 office, which is not enough space for even a small portion of this community to meet. Since this office is located in a communal area among other student organizations, the privacy needed is also not currently being met. The LGBTQA Center Project consists of building a new center to house the Office of LGBTQA Services and serve as a dedicated “safe space” for members of this community. Creating this new center will allow LGBTQA Services to reach more students in and outside the LGBTQA community by way of programming and support. With the reduction in state funding, the university is unable to provide funding for this capital project, but is offering support by funding the office’s Graduate Assistant. In order to complete the LGBTQA Center Project, the office is seeking funds from a private foundation.

The LGBTQA Center Project consists of building a 40 x 40 center for the Office of LGBTQA Services to utilize as office space for the Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Graduate Assistant as well as a multi-purpose room for meetings and events held by this group. This construction is necessary because the current location is not meeting the needs of this community and contributes to the negative “climate.” The goal is to provide a safe space for LGBTQA members to utilize and be comfortable going to with questions. A center staffed by people who are familiar with the community and can help answer questions LGBTQA students may ask. The objectives will be met by completing the construction of the new center by the end of 2015 and have the center open for the 2016-2017 school year.

A second goal is to increase the knowledge of those individuals who are unfamiliar with this community by holding educational lectures and other such events to provide information. This goal will be met by establishing programs to take place in the new center throughout the school year on varying topics that the LGBTQA Advocacy Committee determines will benefit the audience. A post-test will be conducted to see how the views towards the LGBTQA community have changed, if at all. A similar survey was administered in 2011, so the results from both surveys will act as a viable pre/post-test of the effects of the new center.

1. **EVALUATION**

The LGBTQA Center Project will have a pre/post-test and comparison group evaluation design. The pre-test component, known as the “Campus Climate Survey” was administered in April of 2010, and consisted of 113 questions with room for respondents to provide commentary. The survey was designed to obtain personal experiences of the respondents with regards to campus climate, their perceptions of the campus climate, student and employee satisfaction, and respondents’ perceptions of administrative policies and academic initiatives. The pre-test had a 30% response rate, totaling 4,800 respondents, and results indicated the LGBTQA community had the lowest satisfaction with regards to the climate. Results also showed awareness and diversity within West Chester University is lacking, and there did not appear to be many initiatives to raise awareness. Respondents considering themselves to be LGBTQA reported feeling harassed or excluded due to their sexual orientation.

The post-test will be administered in the same manner to determine if the LGBTQA Center raised awareness and satisfaction while also decreasing harassment. Since the center will open in the fall of 2016, the post-test will be administered after one year of it being open, in the fall of 2017. As with the pre-test, Rankin & Associates will perform the post-test. In addition to these survey results within the university, a comparison will also be made between West Chester and two local universities, Penn State and Kutztown. Both of these universities have fully functional LGBTQA Centers and have had so for several years. Kutztown is similar to West Chester University in size and diverse population, as well as tuition costs. Although Penn State has a larger main campus, it does have many satellite locations which are not only similar to West Chester in size and population but also geographically.

Due to the length of time between tests, there are limitations to the statistical conclusion validity. Since the post-test will not be administered until seven years after the pre-test, results may be skewed. One approach to minimize this validity issue is to distribute an in-house survey to LGBTQA community members when the center opens. At the conclusion of each semester, it will be re-administered. This approach of using a cross-sectional study is a less costly way to deal with the issue of attrition. The design and administration of this in-house survey will be done under the supervision of the LGBTQA Director, and distributed via electronic mail.

1. **BUDGET**

**Personnel**

**Total Personnel Costs: $262,000**

**Salary & Fringe Benefits Budget Detail Narrative:**

**Coordinator of LGBTQA Services**: This position requires a Doctorate degree and is the assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs. This position will dedicate 50% of the work day to LGBTQA services. Total Salary for this position is $70,000 with $35,000 being paid for work done for LGBTQA. Full benefits will be offered including defined contribution, $4,250 annually, and health benefits, $9,000 annually. Total cost including salary, taxes and benefits is $89,150

**Faculty Associate for LGBTQA Services:** This position requires a Doctorate degree and will dedicate 50% of the work day to LGBTQA services. Total Salary for this position is $70,000 with $35,000 being paid for work done for LGBTQA. Full benefits will be offered including defined contribution, $4,250 annually and health benefits $9,000 annually. Total cost including salary, taxes and benefits is $89,150.

**Assistant Coordinator LGBTQA Services:** This position requires a bachelor’s degree and will dedicate 50% of the work day to LGBTQA services. Total salary for this position is $50,000 with $25,000 being paid for work done for LGBTQA. Full benefits will be offered including defined contribution, $3,000 annually and health benefits, $9,000 annually. Total cost including salary, taxes and benefits is $66,500.

**Graduate Assistant:** This position requires a bachelor’s degree and is awarded to a student working towards a graduate degree. This individual will dedicate 100% of the work day to LGBTQA services. Total salary for this position is $16,000 with a defined contribution of $1,400 and no health benefits. Total cost including salary and taxes is $17,400.

**Requested**: $0

**WCU In-kind**:$262,200

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Personnel Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Salaries &Fringe Benefits | $0 | $262,200 | $262,200 |
| **Subtotals** | $0 | $262,200 | $262,200 |

**Equipment**

**Total Cost:** $17,900

**Total Equipment & Furniture Expense:** Grant money will be used to purchase 15 folding tables, estimated cost $180 per table and 80 folding chairs at $160 for a package of four. An audio visual system will be installed for a “smart classroom” design. The system will include a projector and screen for presentations, as well as a podium integrated with computer connection. The estimated cost is $12,000 for equipment and installation. Total cost is $17,900

**Requested:** $17,900

**WCU In-kind: $0**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Equipment Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Tables | $2,700 | 0 | $2,700 |
| Chairs | $3,200 | 0 | $3,200 |
| “Smart Classroom” Equipment | $12,000 | 0 | $12,000 |
| **Subtotals** | $17,900 | 0 | $17,900 |

C**ontractual**

**Total Cost: $XXXX**

**Contractual**: Rankin & Associates, Consulting administered and assessed results of the “Campus Climate Survey” which serves as the pre-test. The Office of LGBTQA Services will hire this consulting firm to administer and assess the results of the post-test, after the LGBTQA Center has been open and fully functional for one full year.

**Requested: $XXXX**

**WCU In-kind: $XXXX**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Contractual Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Contractual | $XXXX | **$XXXX** | **$XXXX** |
| **Subtotals** | **$XXXX** | **$XXXX** | **$XXXX** |

**Construction**

**Total Cost** $256,000

**Construction:** The proposed space for the LGBTQA center is a 40 x 40 area, which totals 1,600 square feet. The estimated cost is $160 per square foot, making the cost $256,000. This will consist of office space as well as a multi-purpose room for seminars, weekly meetings, guest speakers, and organized community events. In addition, a 5 x 5 storage area will be designated for folding chairs and tables to utilize for events as needed. This space will also be available for the Office of LGBTQA Services to rent out when available for a fee. That money will be deposited into an account, from which the accrued interest will be used for unforeseen needs of the LGBTQA community.

**Requested: $256,000**

**WCU In-kind: $0**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Construction Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Construction | **$256,000** | $0 | **$256,000** |
| **Subtotals** | **$256,000** | $0 | **$256,000** |

**Miscellaneous**

**Total Cost: $18,000**

**Miscellaneous**: This money will be allocated for seminars and programs offered by the Office of LGBTQA Services and the LGBTQA student organization’s weekly meetings. The LGBTQA student organization receives funding from the West Chester University student activities budget each year, which is allocated towards events for LGBTQA. This year, the organization received $9,000 from this budget and will be the in-kind funding.

**Requested: $9,000**

**WCU In-kind: $9,000**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Miscellaneous Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Miscellaneous | $9,000 | $9,000 | $18,000 |
| **Subtotals** | $9,000 | $9,000 | $18,000 |

**Indirect Costs**

**Total Costs: $2,500.00**

**Indirect Costs:** West Chester University allocates $1,500 for operating expenses. For the past five years, the Provost's office has also allocated an additional $1,000, totaling $2,500 for indirect costs such as maintenance, phone bills, internet, and any other cost arising to ensure the center is run at high functionality and to the potential expected.

**Requested: $0**

**WCU In-kind: $2,500**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQA Center Project Indirect Expenses Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| Indirect Costs | 0 | $2,500 | $2,500 |
| **Subtotals** | 0 | $2,500 | $2,500 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LBTQA Center Project Budget Summary** | | | |
| **Line Item** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| **Salaries &Fringe Benefits** | **$0** | **$262,200** | **$262,200** |
| **Equipment** | **$17,900** | **$0** | **$17,900** |
| **Contractual** | **$XXXX** | **$XXXX** | **$XXXX** |
| **Construction** | **$256,000** | **$0** | **$256,000** |
| **Miscellaneous** | **$9,000** | **$9,000** | **$18,000** |
| **Indirect Costs** | **$0** | **$2,500** | **$XXXXX** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TOTAL SUMMARY** | **Requested** | **In-Kind** | **Total Line Item Expenses** |
| **Direct Costs** | **$282,900** | **$271,200** | **$554,100** |
| **Indirect Costs** | **$0** | **$2,500** | **$2,500** |
| **Total Project Budget** | **$282,900** | **$273,700** | **$556,600** |

\*Note missing the amount for consulting for evaluation post-test.

1. **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

The Office of LGBTQA Services of West Chester University falls under the purview of the Division of Student Affairs and has been working towards aiding students who identify themselves as a member of the LGBTQA community. Services offered by this office include factual information for those unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity, support and resources for members and positive programming to improve the campus climate surrounding the LGBTQA community. Other programs are designed to prepare these students for post-graduation life. This office works hard to make LGBTQA students attending West Chester University not only feel comfortable being who they are, but arm them with tools and information they can use to live positively for the rest of their lives.

The organizational staff for the Office of LBGTQA Services is modest, containing only three individuals, all of whom are highly qualified in the area of LGBTQA. The Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Jacqueline Hodes is the current coordinator for the Office of LGBTQA Services, her assistant is Hannah Schmitz and Dr. Lisa Ruchti serves as the Faculty Associate. This team of women has done remarkable work during the past few yearsto improve life on campus for the LGBTQA Community. One of the most recent achievements is providing a unisex bathroom in the university’s new recreation center so transitioning students do not have issues choosing which restroom to use. Additionally, the office received approval of funding for a Graduate Assistant during the 2012-2013 school years. With this expansion in staff, the Office of LGBTQA Services will be able to better serve the current members and bring in more.

As it stands, the majority of members are undergraduates as programming is done on West Chester University’s main campus. Typically, unless a graduate student attended West Chester University for their undergraduate coursework, they are unaware of the Office of LGBTQA Services because they only occupy a small area among other student organizations. The goal is to raise awareness and sensitivity about LGBTQA issues. Having a dedicated space will allow the expansion of the services offered. The Office of LGBTQA Services has a wide variety of programs and services offered to faculty, staff and students. They offer a two-part “Ally Training” program which teaches faculty, staff, and students to be allies to the LGBTQA campus community by giving an overview of LGBTQA history, terms, and current issues as well as resources to be an advocate and ally to LGBTQA students, faculty, and staff. Allies are provided with an on-line manual and a door sticker identifying them as an LGBTQA Ally. Additionally, there is an alumni chapter which includes a Facebook page to keep in touch and up to date on events.

The Office of LGBTQA Services gives out two different awards each year to deserving Faculty/Staff, students and alumnus. Also, there are five scholarships offered to students which contain varying criteria but all relate to serving the LGBTQA community. Another program is “Speak Outs” which are events where individuals volunteer their story to raise awareness and sensitivity to LGBTQA issues. While the Office of LGBTQA Services has been making improvements to the climate on West Chester’s campus, there still exists the community who condemn homosexuality. To contrast protestors, LGBTQA has a program called Project Lemonade, which allows money to be raised to fund positive programming.

In addition to this office thriving on campus, there is a student organization, LGBTQA, which offers additional support to students of this community. This organization will be the primary resident of the multi-purpose room in the new center as it will serve as their weekly meeting location and a space to hold guest lectures and fundraising events. LGBTQA Services works closely with the LGBTQA Student Organization to create a safe space for individuals to talk and explore their thoughts and feelings about sexual orientation, sexuality, and gender identity. The coordinator of LGBTQA Services is the advisor to the LGBTQA and assists the group in creating a warmer campus climate for everyone. By providing a dedicated, office area and multi-purpose room for this office, this office can do more work and be better known at the university as a safe place for LGBTQA students, faculty and staff to come.

1. **CONCLUSION**

The inadequate size of the current Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transexual, Queer/Questioning and Ally (LGBTQA) Services Center is no longer meeting the educational or developmental needs necessary to adequately help those students who are in need of counseling or help. In order to continue to serve this population, West Chester University (WCU) has invested so much in over the years. Now, a larger space is a dire need to carry out its mission of helping the LGBTQA community of students at West Chester University.

Nearly ten percent of WCU’s 15,000 student body identifies themselves as being LGBTQA. The current space available to them is grossly undersized and insufficient to handle the needs of this population. By building a larger space, the Services Center will be able to serve and invest in the LGBTQA student community of WCU. This desire is propelled by the need to not only help those who are experiencing distress on campus, but also to educate those who have hostility in their hearts and broaden the minds of young people who will become the leaders we will look up to one day.

**Booth Ferris Foundation Guidelines:**

**Proposal** (maximum of three pages) which includes:

* + Overview of the organization (i.e., primary goals, needs or problems being addressed, population served)
  + Description of the project for which you are seeking support
    - Statement of purpose and the needs being addressed by the project
    - Population served and how they will benefit from the project
    - Project timeline/anticipated project duration
  + Brief biography of the executive director and key project staff

**BIOGRAPH**Y

West Chester University supports LGBTQA issues. In an attempt to discover what WCU students and faculty wanted, they administered a “Campus Climate Survey”. That survey revealed a consistent quantitative revelation, that while the climate has an overall positive (in regards to most be pleased with how the campus treats them) atmosphere among most students, there were two categories of people whom felt mistreated: people of color and the LGBQTA community.

The LGBTQA which is a subcategory of WCU’s Student affairs is directed by Dr. Jackie Hodes. Dr. Jackie Hodes coordinate the services for LGBTQA students, faculty, and staff at West Chester. She also serves as the advisor to the student group, also named LGBTQA. Additionally, Dr. Hodes provides counseling support for students and serves on the Campus Climate Intervention Team.

Dr. Jackie Hodes graduated with B.A in 1981 with a major in psychology and sociology and immediately pursued her master’s degree and received her masters from the University of Delaware in College Counseling and Student Personnel Administration. Dr. Hodes joined and began working for West Chester University in 1986 and currently resides as the assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Dr. Hodes has served as a member on numerous committee’s that pertain to women’s rights, LGBTQA rights, alcohol and substance prevention and multicultural issues and advocacy; as well as serving as Chair and co-chair on numerous committees involving West Chester University.

Jackie has publications ‘reducing college drinking as well as publications on sex roles. Dr. Hodes has written and received funding for many grants including; grants for the student leadership department as well as for the LGBTQA department. Dr. Hodes has been a guest speaker at seminars most recently that include topics for leadership and advocacy and support for the LGBTQA community.

Dr. Hodes has received numerous awards for her work in volunteerism, women’s rights, leadership, and LGBT work. She most recently received, Gittings/ Kameny Gay Pioneers Award, WCU, April, 2012. She has spent her exceptional career serving the University and the rights of others. She has taught classes since 1986 while also maintaining her position as administration. Her current responsibilities include Provide counseling, assistance, and support to students with personal and academic concerns and problems. Serve as a judicial hearing officer for complex alcohol/drug and sexual assault cases. Manage budgets for funds in Student Affairs (Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, LGBTQA Services, and all accounts for student affairs fundraising.

.

The Assistant to the VP for Student Affairs, a faculty associate, a graduate assistant, and many student leaders work together to create a warm and welcoming climate at WCU

**Previous Grants**

Hodes, J.*”LGBTQA Speakout Team Training”,* PA-SSHE Diversity Grant, $ 8,000, August 2006.

Hodes, J. & Mader, R. *“Integrating LGBT Services into the Campus Community”,* WCU New Funding Requests, $ 24,000, August 2006.

Organizational Needs:

The Office of LGBTQA Services is an administrative unit within the Division of Student Affairs. The unit was created in 1994 to assist students with issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. University and community members who are "out" or questioning their sexuality or gender identity can find a "safe space" with LGBTQA Services.

LGBTQA Services provides information, resources, and support for programming to members of the university and the community. The office offers counseling for students who want a “safe space” and also offer programs where students can “speak out” about sensitivity. They also hold weekly meetings for one hour to discuss various topics, as well as community support meetings (meeting people).